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February 10, 2014

California Coastal Commission
c/o Sea-level Rise Work Group
45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105
By Email: SLRGuidanceDocument@coastal.ca.gov

RE: Environmental Health Coalition SUPPORT of Sea Level Rise Guidance Document

Dear Coastal Commissioners:

Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) is a 34-year old environmental justice organization working to empower people, organize communities, and achieve justice in the bi-national San Diego/Tijuana region. Many of our members live near San Diego Bay or reaches of its watershed. The issue of climate change and sea level rise are significant to their families and communities. We know that impacts of climate change will hit low income communities first and hardest. Flooding of our neighborhoods in high tide events, where infrastructure investments are lowest, is a key concern if the appropriate planning and early actions are not taken.

However, we recommend that the guidance be amended to include clear and proactive requirements to address the presence and use of hazardous materials in areas that could be impacted by sea level rise or other climate related impacts. There are many examples on the Port tidelands, for example, where significant quantities of hazardous materials are stored and used. There needs to be special, proactive planning for these areas to ensure that these materials are not released into neighborhoods or the environment.

Further, we are also concerned about the impacts of sea level rise on many of the natural and recreational areas around San Diego Bay. Loss of these areas is a key concern so we would request any additional proactive measures that the Commission can direct planners to incorporate would be beneficial. These areas are more at-risk and so must be prioritized higher than other uses.

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We support the approach outlined in the Coastal Commission draft document and urge its adoption with amendments to include specific guidance about hazardous materials and higher priority for natural areas at-risk. The Port District and other planning entities in the San Diego Bay watershed need and will benefit from the clear guidance contained in the Draft.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Laura Hunter
Environmental Health Coalition